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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 KATHMANDU 000076

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TAGS: [PTER UN NP](#)

SUBJECT: NEPAL: POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE WEST AGREE MAOISTS  
HAVE NOT CHANGED

REF: 06 KATHMANDU 3248

Classified By: CDA Nicholas J. Dean. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

1. (C) Leaders of the main political parties from 12 districts in western Nepal told Emboff during a driving tour from December 14-25 that the Maoists were effectively in control of their districts. The only difference between the Maoists before the April 2006 cease-fire and after the cease-fire was that the Maoists were not killing people anymore. Most agreed that the Maoist intimidation and violence were making it difficult for political party workers to function in the countryside. Most party leaders were pessimistic about the prospect for free and fair elections any time soon.

Maoists Control Western Nepal

2. (C) During Emboff's driving tour of the western (around Pokhara), mid-western (around Birendranagar), and far-western (around Dipayal) development regions from December 14-25, political leaders in 12 districts stated that the Maoists were effectively in control of their districts. Emboff met with leaders from the three main parties -- Nepali Congress (NC), the Nepali Congress-Democratic (NC-D), and the Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) -- in every district, and additionally with the smaller Nepal Sadbhavana Party-Anandi Devi (NSP-A) and the People's Front Nepal (PFN) in two districts. Leaders in all the districts told of continued Maoist violence and intimidation. Across the country, one common message from all political leaders was that the situation with the Maoists was essentially the same as before the April 2006 cease-fire; the "only thing that is different is that the Maoists are not killing people now."

Party Leaders Displaced in Dang

3. (C) In Dang District, political leaders flatly stated that they were scared of the Maoists, and did not feel like they

could stand up to them. The leaders in Dang said they were not convinced that the Maoists were willing to ever give up their ideology of violence, because then they would lose their perceived power. The leaders in the district had all been displaced from their homes in the countryside by the Maoists during the decade-long insurgency, and had not yet been allowed to return. In fact, they said, the Maoists had not allowed them or their party workers to travel outside of the district headquarters. The NC leader in Dang told of a fellow NC worker who had recently attempted to do some work in the countryside outside of Tulsipur. When the Maoists found out he was there, they abducted him and beat him badly, then returned him to his home in Tulsipur with orders to ask permission before attempting to do political work outside of the city.

#### Problems in Pyuthan

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¶4. (C) In Pyuthan District, the leaders of the three main parties told Emboff that the Maoists had taken over every level of local governance, including forestry and water users groups. All development projects, the leaders claimed, were being used by the Maoists to assert control over the countryside. The CPN-UML leader in Pyuthan said that the Maoists were "wreaking havoc" on the countryside, and the villagers were afraid of them.

#### Parties Scared in Rolpa

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¶5. (C) In Rolpa District, Emboff met with the leaders of the

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three main political parties and the PFN in a locked room in the back of a hotel because the party leaders were afraid the Maoists might hear them talking badly about the Maoists and "punish them." Most of the leaders said they had family or property outside of Liwang, the district headquarters, that the Maoists had threatened to hurt or destroy if they acted against them. They shared a laundry list of Maoist atrocities in the district, including, but not limited to: roadblocks, extortion, abduction, child recruitment, carrying weapons, wearing combat fatigues to intimidate villagers, continued violence, and threats against people and property. The leaders in Rolpa said that the Maoists had begun to allow them to "work freely" outside of Liwang, but only if they signed an agreement with the Maoists. In that agreement, the parties had committed not to say anything negative about the Maoists or the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), and to only use certain words ("King" was forbidden and "democratic republic" was required).

#### Situation Bad in Salyan

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¶6. (C) In Salyan District, the leaders of the three main parties said that fear of the Maoists in the countryside had not decreased at all since the cease-fire. All political leaders in the district had been displaced from their homes and the Maoists had not allowed them to return.

#### Maoists Leave Cantonments in Kailali

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¶7. (C) In Kailali District, the parties told Emboff, "we are afraid, the people are afraid, and no one is doing anything to make the situation better." The leaders in Kailali complained that, during a recent Maoist-called transportation strike (reftel), members of the Maoist People's Liberation Army (PLA) came out of their cantonments with weapons and threatened people who tried to break the strike, adding to the fear in the district. The leaders said that every time something like that happened, trust of the Maoists declined immensely.

## Fear Palpable in Achham

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18. (C) In Achham District, Emboff met with leaders from the three main parties on a hilltop in a darkened, locked room lit only by candlelight. The leaders were so afraid of the Maoists overhearing what they were saying that they had people standing watch outside the building to warn of someone approaching. Every time the wind blew the door or the windows, the leaders stopped talking to ask, "who is there, who is approaching?" In lowered voices, the political party leaders recounted stories about how the Maoists continued to threaten them and their families if they said negative things about them. The leader of the NC-D in Mangalsen, the district headquarters, said that the Maoists were still out in the rural villages with weapons, and continued to threaten and intimidate the villagers. All three parties complained that the Maoists could not be trusted, and were convinced that the Maoists would stop at nothing short of complete power.

## Other Problems in the Terai

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19. (C) In Kapilbastu District in the Terai, the three main parties and the NSP-A said they were allowed to work relatively freely by the Maoists, as long as they did not say anything negative about them. However, the Maoists had not allowed any of the leaders to return to their homes in the countryside yet. In the Terai districts, most political leaders were more concerned with the Janatantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM) -- the Terai People's Liberation Front -- than with the Maoists. The JTMM, a splinter faction of the Maoists, had been killing and intimidating openly in the south of the country. One leader in Banke District said, "if

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it is not the Maoists, it is the JTMM."

## Free and Fair Elections Impossible

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110. (C) The leaders in most districts worried that free and fair elections would not be possible in their districts unless the Maoists completely gave up their ideology of violence and intimidation. In Kapilbastu District, the CPN-UML leader stated that it would be difficult to hold elections by June, but if they had to, it would only be possible with a large contingent of UN and other international monitors on the ground. Leaders of the NC in Tulsipur (Dang District) said there was "no hope" for elections by June, and "probably not in the next year."

## Delay of Elections May be Necessary

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111. (C) In Pyuthan District, the CPN-UML and NC leaders said that elections had to be held on time in June, regardless of whether they were free and fair, to "hold the Maoists to their commitments." The NC-D leader in Pyuthan disagreed, stating that elections needed to be delayed until later to make sure that voter education and security could happen first. In Rolpa District, the leaders of the three main parties stated that it would not matter if the election were delayed for five or even ten years if the Maoists did not give up their ideology of violence. Leaders in Rolpa worried that the Maoists had shown no signs of giving up that ideology and wanted to control any elections that might happen in the future. Leaders of the three main parties in Dang said that until the Maoists allowed political leaders and villagers to return to their villages, there could not be accurate voter registration.

## Maoists Will Win by Intimidation

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¶12. (C) In the far-west districts of Kailali, Dadeldhura, Doti, and Achham, the situation was even worse. Most political leaders in these districts said it was important to hold elections, but predicted that the Maoists would win in many places purely through intimidation and violence. In Achham, the CPN-UML leader told Emboff that Maoists had already told many villagers that the Maoists would keep track of their votes. If they voted against the Maoists, the Maoists would punish them or their families. The Maoists admonished the villagers that "we do not need our weapons, we can use sticks or our fists."

Comment: Maoist Strategy Unchanged  
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¶13. (C) The fact that the Maoists had not changed in the countryside since the April 2006 cease-fire was not surprising, although the extent of their intimidation and violence was unexpected. For arms management and the peace process to be successful, Maoist militia and political cadre, as well as combatants in the cantonments, will need to give up their weapons. Political party leaders made it clear, however, that giving up weapons alone would not change the situation in the countryside. Maoists would also have to give up their strategy of using fear to control the people. Indications are that the Maoists do not plan to give up this strategy anytime soon -- but instead plan to move full-speed ahead toward a Maoist-dominated People's Republic of Nepal.

Comment: But We Can Still Shape Election Outcome  
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¶14. (C) The Maoist-dominated political situation across western Nepal is negative, with little to give us hope for a free and fair elections without the re-establishment of law and order. However, the political party leaders are present, and ready to become actively engaged in politics again should the peace process deliver security. We should continue to

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strengthen the peaceful, democratic political parties to stand up to Maoist intimidation and extortion during the lead-up to the planned Constituent Assembly election in June. The situation in the countryside underscores the need for large numbers of international observers on the ground soonest in order to have credibly free and fair elections.  
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